

Images and Voices of Hope:

An Appreciative Interview Guide

We are meeting today to launch a National Conversation on “Images and Voices of Hope: A Question of Choice.” This project is designed to raise awareness about the far-reaching opportunities and consequences of the messages being transmitted to society through images, voices, and stories in media.

In the conversation of this afternoon, you are invited to share and appreciate stories and images of hope and to explore the kind of media system we really want for the enhanced creation and distribution of such imagery.

This Appreciative Interview Guide will help you to start your conversation. On the following pages you find a set of questions we would like pairs to reflect on in the form of an “appreciative inquiry” mutual interview. We ask you to interview someone from your table you do not know and who is different from you. Take 20 minutes to interview - to appreciate, learn from, and get to know - your partner. Later you will be invited to introduce him or her to the people around your table, and to share key learnings and highlights from your interview (if you want you might wish to take a few notes). When the interview is complete, take 20 minutes for your partner to interview you.

The questions are offered to spark and nurture your dialogue, to get into a good conversation with each other. Give your partner your full attention, and draw out the richness of the stories and images that he or she shares with you. When finished with the interview simply thank your partner, and take note of what was important, surprising, challenging, or uplifting in this experience.

(Please return to your table at _____ o'clock)

New York, 8 June 1999

Question 1. Introduction

To start, I would like to get to know you a little bit. Can you tell me about who you are, where you are coming from, and what it is that interests, excites, or draws you to this Roundtable Conversation?

Question 2. A story that tells something about you and your life

We have all been part of efforts where we have joined with others to make things better in our families, organizations, communities, etc. Through our participation in such efforts, we all have taken small steps and big steps toward bringing our dreams of a better world into being.

As you scan your memories across your life - the ups and downs, and peaks and valleys - I would like you to think about one memorable experience, a time in which you were part of something that evoked in you a significant, expanded sense of hope about our possibilities to create a better world. Please *share with me the story of this memorable experience....how it unfolded...who was involved...what special qualities and gifts you brought to this effort...what were your feelings...your insights? Any learnings that are useful for our work here today on images and voices of hope?*

Question 3. Imagining the future world and media system you really want

a) Your vision of a better world

Let's assume that it is ten years into the future - now it is the year 2009. Finally, your very best vision for the world has come true, and it became exactly as you want it to be - for yourself, for children, for grandchildren, etc. As you go into this new world - *what do you see...what is it like to live in this world...what is happening that is new, different, better?*

b) Your vision of a better media system

The language, images, and stories that are created and disseminated by the media system have a profound impact on our society, as well as every other society on the planet. Our collective imagery can transform the world in powerful ways.

Now that you have described your vision of a future world, imagine the kind of media system that will help us to create this world. Imagine a media system that is working to the best of its capabilities, a system that lives up to the ideal of freedom of speech, and that fully takes its responsibility to serve humanity on this planet. *What does this media system look like...what are its best qualities...what special contributions does it make toward the creation and protection of the world you truly want?*

Question 4. Assessing the current media system

Increasingly, there is a call for a media system that has a clear and high consciousness of its reality shaping role. There is a call for a system that communicates images and voices that expand our collective sense of hope, without falling into the traps of censorship, and without glossing the news or avoiding the tough realities in our world.

With your visions of a future world and media system in mind, I would like you to assess the *current* media system in the light of those visions. As you reflect on the qualities and contributions of our present media system - *what is it in this system that you are most sad or disappointed about?...and, alternatively...what is it in the current system that you are most happy or proud about?*